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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: NSA TARIQ AZIZ READY TO REACH OUT TO AFGHAN  
COUNTERPART

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) During a May 22 conversation, National Security Advisor Tariq Aziz told Ambassador that Pakistan's senior leaders are increasingly concerned by both the security situation in Afghanistan and by public accusations by Afghanistan President Karzai and Foreign Minister Spanta blaming Pakistan for the surge in Taliban attacks on Afghan and Coalition forces. Presidential Chief of Staff LTG Hamid Javaid and Aziz have counseled an irritated President Musharraf to exercise restraint, to avoid yet another spiral of unhelpful cross-border rhetoric.

¶2. (S) According to Aziz, the Government of Pakistan (GOP) fully appreciates that the situation on the ground is serious, hence President Musharraf's active engagement on Pakistan's three-tiered FATA strategy. Aziz confirmed that former 11th Corps Commander LTG (ret) Ali Muhammad Jan Orakzai will replace Khalid ur-Rehman as Governor in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and that the President is serious about installing new, stronger Political Agents to implement political reforms and engage the tribes on economic and social development. The Taliban pose the same threat on both sides of the border, Aziz noted, saying that Kabul and Islamabad should cooperate on confronting this common danger.

¶3. (S) The Ambassador suggested that Aziz call Afghan NSA Zalimay Rasool to invite him to Islamabad to brief him on the GOP's FATA strategy and explore coordinated Pak-Afghan action. Aziz replied that he had considered such a step, but was concerned that, in the current atmosphere, there was too great a chance that President Karzai would prohibit Rasool from accepting Aziz' invitation -- a scenario best avoided, as a rejected invitation would enrage President Musharraf. After the Ambassador pointed out that it should not be too difficult to manage a phone conversation that avoided such an outcome, Aziz telephoned Afghan Ambassador Tarzi and asked him to set up a telephone consultation with Rasool. When Tarzi responded that Rasool was with President Karzai in Dubai, Aziz asked that a call be arranged after Rasool's return to Kabul on May 23.

¶4. (S) Comment: The steady barrage cross-border criticism targeted at Islamabad the past two weeks neither helps the GOP stabilize the FATA or execute the security operations necessary to deny anti-Coalition militias safe haven along the Pak-Afghan border. Post believes that the sooner Aziz and Rasool can speak to each other directly, the sooner the two governments can direct their energies toward their common enemy. Facilitating an Aziz-Rasool telephone call is a first step -- and if Aziz extends an invitation for face-to-face consultations, we hope that Embassy Kabul will encourage Rasool to accept.  
CROCKER